

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Norma White

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	White, Norma Solomon
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Norma White,
<b>Dates:</b>	February 27, 2008
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2008
<b>Physical Description:</b>	3 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:07:51).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Association chief executive Norma White (1934 - ) was the 25th International President of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. She also served as an educator in Jacksonville, Florida Public Schools for many years. White was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 27, 2008, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2008_033
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Association chief executive, Norma Solomon White was born on November 17, 1934 in Jacksonville, Florida. In 1998, White was elected as the 25th International President of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated, a position she held until 2002. Under White's leadership the Alpha Kappa Alpha administration focused its agenda on "Blazing New Trails."

White was inducted into the Beta Alpha chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha at Florida A&M University (FAMU) in 1950. As a student at FAMU, White was the first female member of the famed FAMU Marching 100 Band to graduate. She graduated in 1955 with her B.S. degree and furthered her education by earning her M.A. degree in music at Columbia University. After graduating, White pursued a career in education in the public schools of Jacksonville, Florida.

White served as Regional Director for the South Atlantic Region from 1974 until 1978 and was successful in raising \$100,000 for the United Negro College Fund. She later was elected to the office of First Supreme Anti-Basileus at the 56th Boule in Indianapolis, Indiana. In that capacity, she also served as the first vice-president of the sorority's Educational Foundation Board. Then, in 1998, White became the 25th Supreme Basileus of Alpha Kappa Alpha at the Boule held in Chicago, Illinois. The theme for her administration embraced six target areas: leadership development, education, health, the black family, economics and the arts. White also initiated the sorority's "On Track" after school program which targeted at-risk students in grades three through six to prepare them for middle school.

White is Alpha Kappa Alpha's first Supreme Basileus to be part of a mother-daughter legacy and is honored as the first female member of the famed FAMU Marching 100 Band through Jacksonville, Florida's proclaimed day for her.

Dr. Norma Solomon White was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on February 27, 2008.

## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Norma White was conducted by Denise Gines on February 27, 2008, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 3 Betacame SP videocassettes. Association chief executive Norma White (1934 - ) was the 25th International President of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. She also served as an educator in Jacksonville, Florida Public Schools for many years.

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## Restrictions

### Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

### Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

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## Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

White, Norma Solomon

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

White, Norma Solomon--Interviews

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African American women--Interviews

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African American women civic leaders.

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Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

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## Occupations:

Association Chief Executive

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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## Administrative Information

### Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

### Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Norma White, February 27, 2008. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

### Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

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## Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

## Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Norma White, Section A2008\_033\_001\_001, TRT: 0:28:49 ?

Norma White was born on November 17, 1934 in Jacksonville, Florida to Ruth Alma Cummings. She attended the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College for Negroes in Tallahassee, where she joined the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority (AKA). Upon earning her degree, White transferred to AKA's graduate chapter, where she served as basileus, a role previously held by her mother. She also briefly served as regional director before returning to the position of basileus. White was appointed to the National Program Committee by AKA president Mattelia Grays; and, from that point on, continued to advance in the organization. During their tenures as supreme basileus, Bernice Sumlin and Mary Shy Scott encouraged White to run for the position, and she was successful in her second attempt. As supreme basileus, White focused on educational initiatives, including the ON TRACK program, which encouraged students to stay in school; and building schools in South Africa. White also describes her leadership style and vision for AKA.

African American leadership.

African American women civic leaders.

African Americans--Florida--Jacksonville--Social life and customs.

African Americans--Education--Florida--History--20th century.

Video Oral History Interview with Norma White, Section A2008\_033\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:02 ?

Norma White was born on November 11, 1934 in Jacksonville, Florida to Ruth Alma Cummings. Her mother was born in Aiken, South Carolina in 1914, and moved at a young age to Jacksonville. There, White was raised by her mother and maternal grandparents, William Cummings, who was a minister and strict disciplinarian; and Lela Cummings, who enjoyed caring for her children and grandchildren. White's mother was the oldest daughter of eight children, several of whom were close in age to White, and served as her playmates. Years later, White became the supreme basileus of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority (AKA). In this role, she sought to involve the entire membership of the sorority in philanthropic work, including fundraising for African American charities and helping build schools. White reflects upon her proudest moments as supreme basileus, including the induction of her granddaughter into AKA; and describes her hopes for the organization in the 21st century.

African American leadership.

African American women civic leaders.

African American families--Florida--Jacksonville.

African Americans--Education--Florida.

African American women--Florida.

Video Oral History Interview with Norma White, Section A2008\_033\_001\_003, TRT: 0:10:00 ?

Norma White's mother, Ruth Alma Cummings Solomon, was the first member of her family to attend college. She studied for two years at the Florida Memorial College in Miami Gardens, before completing her degree at the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College for Negroes in Tallahassee; and later obtained a master's degree from Columbia University in New York City. White's father, dry cleaner Gilbert Solomon, was born in 1908 in Birmingham, Alabama, and had three sisters. He met White's mother after moving to Jacksonville, Florida, where White was raised. Although she never met her paternal grandmother, Emma Solomon, White was close to her paternal

grandfather, Eddie Solomon, who worked on the railroad and as a part-time minister at Jacksonville's West Union Baptist Church. There, all of White's family were members of the congregation, except her father, who never formally joined the church, and stopped attending services after being insulted by the church officials.

African Americans--Florida--Jacksonville--Social life and customs.

African Americans--Education--Florida.

African American families--Florida--Jacksonville.

African Americans--Education--Florida--History--20th century.